

Like

Tweet

in

DM | DANBURY MUSEUM

Hello Friends!



@DanburyMuseum

Danbury Museum garden, spring 2020

This is our fourth Friday newsletter and we're happy to see all of you again! The museum's garden is thriving (thanks to all those beautiful bulbs that the Danbury Garden Club has planted for so many years!) and spring is really taking root. Audrey Hepburn once said that "to plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow" and that certainly seems apt amidst our current challenges.

We endeavor to keep you informed, engaged, and even entertained, so here's what's in store in this newsletter and on the #MuseumFromHome webpage:

- A
great
"Bucket
List"
piece
by
John
O'Donnell
- A
timely
read
by
Bob
Young
about
the
1918
Spanish
Flu
epidemic
in
Danbury
- Additional
distance
learning
and
homeschooling
ideas
and
content
- New
ZOOM
backgrounds!
Surprise
your
friends
and
family
at
your
weekend
virtual
Easter
&
Passover
gatherings
with
Danbury
Fair

and
vintage
Danbury
ZOOM
backgrounds
to
download.

There are new puzzles and a packet you can download to help you and your child/family create a time capsule to document your life during the COVID-19 pandemic. We've posted another of the Tricentennial books, too, this time focusing on Danbury's hatting industry. All of these are on our [#MuseumFromHome](#) webpage. We'll be updating this page often, you'll want to keep checking back to see what is new.

The museum staff talk on the phone daily (there is a lot of laughter, to be honest, and we do our best to bolster one another's spirits) and we're still doing our weekly Wednesday webinars and keeping in touch with our New England area (and beyond) museum colleagues to make sure we are doing everything we can to be able to re-open whenever it is deemed safe.

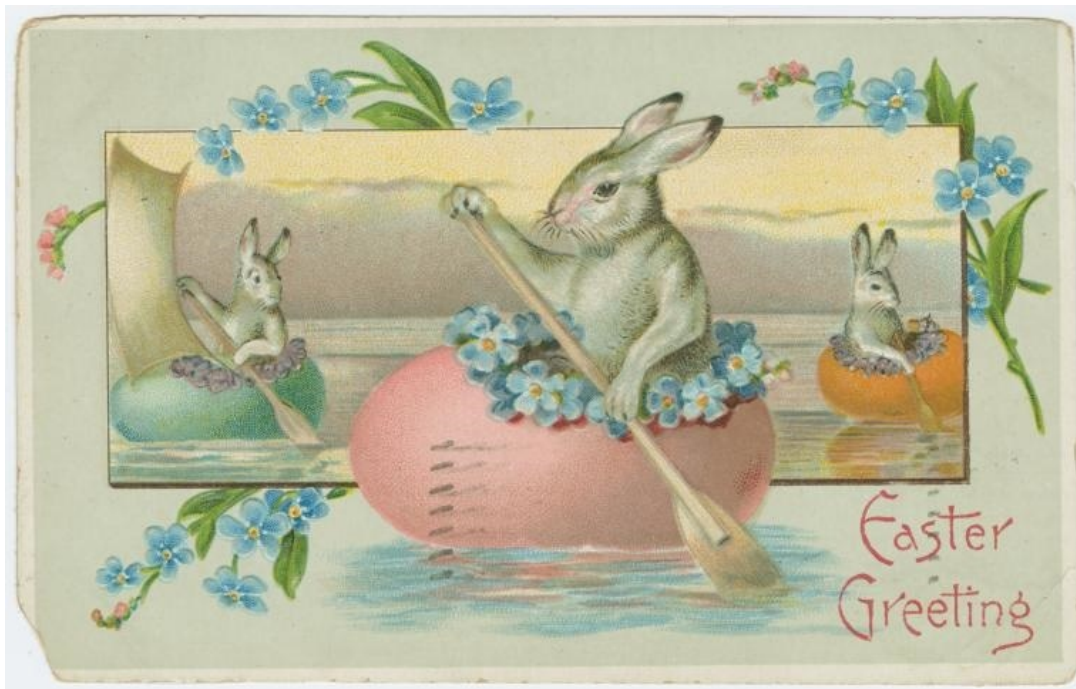
We're all learning new skills while we are working from home, too. Patrick continues to create his puzzles and games and is hard at work on a Danbury Museum version of Jeopardy! that we look forward to playing. Brigid is enlisting the help of her canine work from home colleague for some upcoming content--stay tuned, Jessie is a STAR. Michele (when not on Twitter or Instagram) is *attempting* to learn InDesign so that future museum publications will be next-level professional.

This weekend, we'll be celebrating Easter and Passover in ways we could never have imagined. From our Danbury Museum family to you and yours, we wish you peace, fellowship, and physically distant togetherness.

Keep well,

Brigid Guertin (Executive Director, City Historian, Fearless Leader, Canine Celebrity Wrangler)
Patrick Wells (Research Specialist, Social Media Manager, Purveyor of Puzzles)
Michele Lee Amundsen (Collections Manager, Threader of Tales on Twitter, Aspiring Instagram Influencer)

PS -- If you get a "Click to see entire message" link, click on it! There's a little more newsletter after the message.



Bucket List

By John O'Donnell

Last December I was able to check off another item from my bucket list. I have been a student of the Civil War for most of my life. I have been to the Gettysburg Battlefield twice. It was awe-inspiring to see it both times. One of the other sites that I wished to visit was the Appomattox Court House, scene of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia under General Lee to the Army of the Potomac under General Grant. That surrender took place on April 9, 1865. It led to the end of the bloody conflict.

Last April friends of ours retired to Lexington, Virginia which is a prime location for proximity to Civil War Locations. My wife and I went to visit them and they proposed a visit to Appomattox to facilitate another removal of a bucket list item. We made the trip to the area on a Saturday and had a grand time. One of the most important things for an historian to do is to literally walk the ground of the place he is interested in or is going to write about. Doing this at Gettysburg and at Appomattox has given me a much deeper understanding of the events that took place at both locales.

We took a tour at Appomattox which was very professionally handled by our guide. The McLean House and its parlor (where the surrender took place) are of very modest size for such a momentous event to have taken place there. General Grant had trapped Lee at this location and there was no escape for the Confederate Army. After a series of delicate negotiations, the meeting of Lee and Grant was arranged for April 9, 1865 at the McLean House.

General Lee was accompanied by one of aides, Colonel Marshall, while General Grant was accompanied by fourteen officers. There is a famous painting at the site entitled *The Surrender* by Keith Rocco. One of the people who accompanied Grant that day was Major General John Rawlins, who is in the painting. He was Grant's Chief of Staff and his closest aide throughout the war. Grant relied upon him for advice on any number of military topics, but Rawlins also bluntly told Grant that during the war he had to avoid alcohol consumption and Grant generally acceded

to his advice.

While Grant and Rawlins were at the Siege of Vicksburg in 1863, Union Headquarters were in the William S. Lum house on the first floor. The Lum family lived upstairs and had a woman named Mary Emma Hurlburt staying with them as the governess/companion for their children. Mary Emma Hurlburt had come to Vicksburg from Danbury, Connecticut. She became the go between for the Lum family and Grant and his officers. General Rawlins, who was a widower, was smitten with her. They were married in Danbury on December 24, 1864.

After the war they lived in Danbury. But Rawlins suffered from ill health (probably tuberculosis) and their union was unfortunately a brief one. When Grant became president in 1869, he tapped Rawlins as his Secretary of War. But Rawlins was only able to serve for five months in this capacity and died on September 6, 1869 at the age of 38. His widow eventually remarried but also tragically died on November 6, 1874 at the age of 34. What a tragic ending to this union which came about under very trying circumstances.

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!



The *Danbury News*, September 1918

By Bob Young

Covid-19 is not the first virus to create a pandemic in greater Danbury. Just over 100 years ago a virulent form of influenza ravaged most of the world, including the United States. It was mistakenly labelled the Spanish Flu because the first major outbreak occurred in Spain. However, there had been sporadic cases in many countries, including here. Even though medical knowledge and treatment options were (compared to now) severely limited in 1918, the parallels between these

two outbreaks are striking.

In 1918, Danbury was experiencing rapid growth due to immigration, thanks to the wide variety of factories and shops involved in the hat trade. The population of the city was estimated to be 22,500, with about 40% of that population living within a 6-8 block radius of the intersection of Main and White Street. It was not uncommon to have a dozen or more factory workers and family members living in one small apartment. Factories were humming at full strength. The stage was set for the great influenza pandemic to hit home in Danbury.

The great influenza pandemic began in New York and Connecticut in September 1918. Headlines and articles from the *Danbury News* for that month showed the beginning of what was in store for Danbury.

9/1 The site of “ground zero” for New England was Camp Devens in Massachusetts. It was reported that the hospital at Camp Devens had 1,200 beds, of which 84 were occupied by influenza patients.

9/23 An increasing number of influenza cases being reported in the State.

9/24 Influenza reached epidemic stage in Norwalk with 18-20 new cases per day. Norwalk Hospital was overflowing, and additional doctors and nurses proved to be a scarce commodity.

9/25 The Army put out a call for nurses, stating it would need 50,000 nurses by July 1919 if the pandemic were to continue.

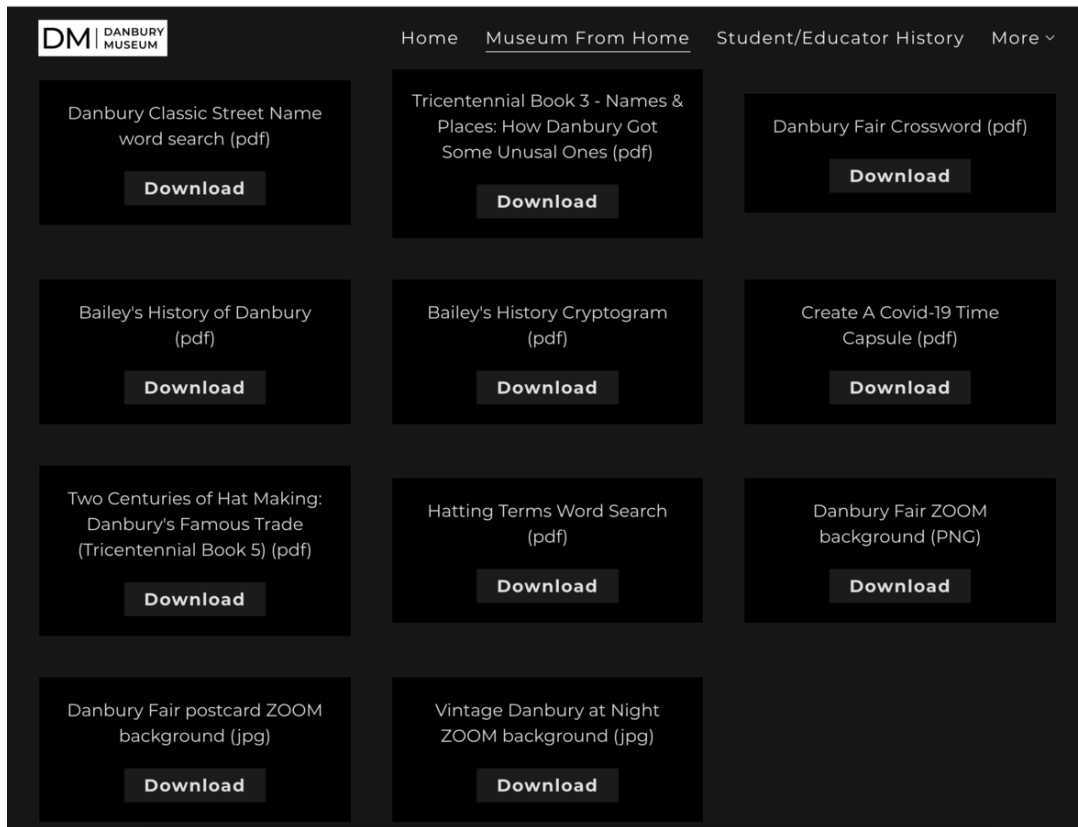
9/26 The rampant spread of the influenza virus resulted in about 1,500 new cases in Camp Devens in just one day. It was soon reported that there were an average of 100 deaths per day, just in Camp Devens. It was also reported that trials of a new influenza vaccine began in Boston.

9/28 The City of Danbury ordered the cancellation of all celebrations until further notice. Congress authorized \$1 million in aid for the fight against influenza.

But the worst was yet to come. October 1918 would prove to be one of the most difficult months in the history of Danbury.

We will look at the month of October next week.

Bob Young has been a history buff all of his life. He was fortunate to grow up just outside of Boston, near Salem, and spent many hours exploring. He's been working on his family's genealogy since he was 18.



Additional Distance Learning/Homeschooling Resources

We've uploaded a lot of puzzles and pamphlets and books to our Museum From Home webpage, but we wanted to share some other ideas for learning and listening.

[Grating the Nutmeg](#) is the podcast of Connecticut history brought to you by [Connecticut Explored](#) and State Historian, Walter Woodward.

[Docs Teach](#) is the online portal from the National Archives and National Archives Foundation for teaching history with documents. They will be hosting mini-webinars on Tuesdays, beginning April 15 for distance learners and homeschooling families. If you follow them on Twitter ([@USNatArchives](#)) and ([@DocsTeach](#)) you can find multiple interactive exercises using primary sources.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Danbury Museum & Historical Society, your hometown museum, archive, and history center, is working hard to provide activities and resources for distance learning that, combined with the wonderful social studies curriculum of our regional school districts, supports a fun, context building, look at our community past and how it connects us all.

On our [Museum From Home](#) page, we've included our beloved Danbury school "newspapers" (created for third graders but appropriate for students through high school) cursive camp materials and several family based suggestions on activities and outside sources to supplement your student's social studies curriculum. The materials found here are for you all to enjoy, download and explore, with all the enthusiasm that we know our local students **always** bring to their museum field trips and museum presentations! We will be adding new digital content weekly through the spring for at home use.

If you have any questions, please reach out by emailing b.guertin@danbury-ct.gov



Danbury Museum
@DanburyMuseum



Need it to reach your [#ArchivesPenPals](#) quickly? Back in the day, Air Mail was the way. [#ArchivesHashtagParty](#) [#ArchivesAtHome](#) [#hatcityhistory](#)



@DanburyMuseum Social Media

We've said it for a long time, there is NO party like an [#ArchivesHashtagParty](#)! The US National Archives hosts monthly "parties" like this where museums, libraries, and archives from all over the world share items from their collection based on that month's theme. April's theme was [#ArchivesPenPals](#) and there were great letters from presidents and movie stars alongside postcards and dispatches from the front lines of most major conflicts.

Missing out on our museum social media feeds? Click on the buttons below and we'll get you connected with us.



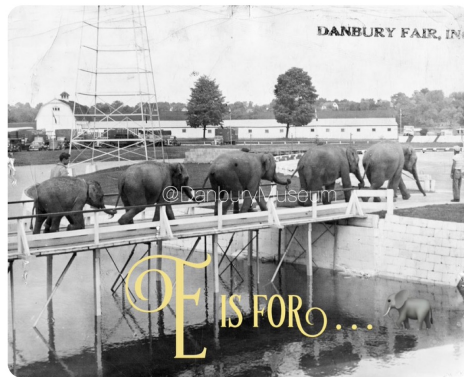
Danbury Museum
@DanburyMuseum

D is for #DINER (🔍🍳🍞🥓🥞☕) for today's #MuseumAlphabet. Who else would love to be having brunch in their favorite diner with friends today?
#MuseumFromHome
#BrunchFromHome #DanburyCT
#hatcityhistory



Danbury Museum
@DanburyMuseum

:: hums "Baby Elephant Walk" :: E is for ... 🐘s holding trunks and tails as they cross the aquaway at the #GreatDanburyStateFair, ca 1948.
#MuseumAlphabet
#MuseumFromHome #elephants
#DanburyCT



Follow Danbury Museum & Historical Society on Facebook

Follow @DanburyMuseum on Instagram

Follow @DanburyMuseum on Twitter



Documenting COVID-19

At the Danbury Museum, we've been collecting and archiving items that document our city's past for **more than 75 years**. Our collection includes several buildings worth of archival materials as well artifacts that tell the tale(s) of our collective past, that inspire and inform the present and that we will be preserving for future scholars, researchers, students and Danburians.

We are currently living through a momentous, somber moment in our collective history. We need your help to document what is going on in your homes, at your jobs, and in communities across Connecticut. We want to hear your story. We want to know how you and your family are experiencing the current pandemic and "new normal."

Below are examples of what we're looking for:

Writings - letters, notes, emails, postcards, poems

Signage - images of window signs, directions, posted community information

Photos - of you, your family, your neighborhood, your street, YOUR Danbury!

Drawings, paintings, and other forms of art you're creating and documenting

Short videos (limited to 500MB file size) for larger files please email to Patrick Wells, Research

Specialist, at p.wells@danbury-ct.gov.

Please stay safe when documenting these historic times. Do not put yourself in danger when capturing photographs or videos.

Why is this Important?

The Danbury Museum collects material that documents the full range of our lives in Danbury, CT because...you INSPIRE us, you INSPIRE the future. Documenting our community response to COVID-19 is a way to preserve the daily struggles of our stay at home community, our work from home community, our students, our critical care and healthcare workers, our first responders and our essential workers. From every perspective, what you are doing right now matters, to us right now, and to future Danburians.

So, when you email Collections Manager, Michele Lee Amundsen at m.amundsen@danbury-ct.gov or mail us your submissions to 43 Main Street, Danbury, CT 06810, please include any or all of the following information:

What else should we know about this object? Please explain who is in the photo, why you created this piece...basically all the information YOU would want to see to give context to a museum exhibition item or an archival file.

Please know that:

By providing my material to the Danbury Museum & Historical Society Authority (DMHSA) I hereby give the DMHSA a royalty-free, non-exclusive, worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, and fully sub-licensable license to copy, digitize, reproduce, edit, translate, create derivative works, distribute, and publicly display and perform certain materials described below. I agree that the DMHSA may add the material to the collection according to the DMHSA Collection Management Policy and to make it available to researchers in a manner consistent with the practices of the DMHSA. I agree that the DMHSA may utilize any medium or media now existing or that will exist in the future to achieve the above-described purposes.

Thank YOU for entrusting the Danbury Museum with your memories, your stories, your art, your images. We take this responsibility seriously and will maintain your gift for future generations so they too may understand what it was like to be here, in Danbury, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 health crisis has had a strong impact on the Danbury Museum, not unlike other public service organizations. To help us continue doing the work we love--from home and from behind the scenes over the next few months--please consider making a donation. Your gift, regardless of size, is important to us as we regroup and continue to work toward eventually reopening to the public.

[Donate here.](#)

[Become a member here.](#)

We'll keep in touch, and we hope you will, too. Be well, take care of yourselves, and we'll look

forward to meeting here again next week.



©2020 The Danbury Museum & Historical Society | 43 Main Street, Danbury, Connecticut 06810, United States

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by
[GoDaddy Email Marketing](#)®